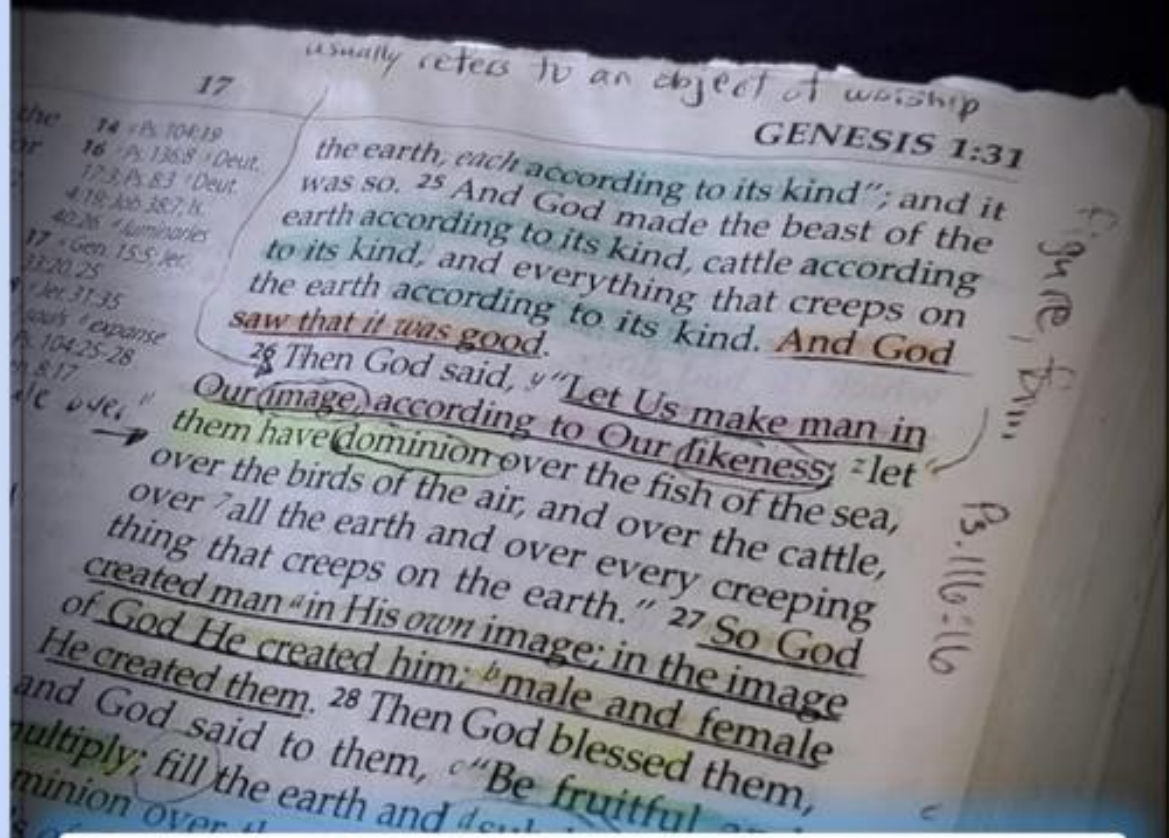


# The Blueprints for Living

## HANDBOOK



**The Official Teaching Curriculum of**

*Blueprints for Living Ministries, Inc.*

**Ruben Constante, Jr.**



THE BLUEPRINTS FOR LIVING HANDBOOK  
Ruben Constante, Jr.

Copyright © 2019, Ruben Constante, Jr.

All rights reserved. Except for brief quotations, no part of this book may be reproduced or used in any form without written permission from the author. Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are taken from the New King James Version. Copyright 1982 Thomas Nelson Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

For more information, contact:

Blueprints for Living Ministries, Inc.  
P.O. Box 1465  
San Marcos, TX 78667

[www.blueprintsflm.org](http://www.blueprintsflm.org)  
[blueprintsflm@gmail.com](mailto:blueprintsflm@gmail.com)



*to Justin Clark,  
you are the Isaac to my Abraham,  
my son of promise*



## **Table of Contents**

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	p. 9
<i>Introduction</i>	p. 11
1. The Blueprint of God's Image	p. 15
2. The Blueprint of Gender Design	p. 23
3. The Blueprint of Marriage	p. 31
4. The Blueprint of the Church	p. 37
5. The Blueprint of Discipleship, Pt. 1	p. 45
6. The Blueprint of Discipleship, Pr. 2	p. 57
<i>Conclusion</i>	p. 63
About the Author	p. 67





## Acknowledgements

Nothing is created in a vacuum.

As such, everything I've become and all that I am today is due to the influences I've been exposed to. And even though the time and space would fail to me list everyone who's impacted my life, there are a few who are worth mentioning regarding this book.

First, there is my gentle wife, Penny Constante. She is my 1 Peter 3 wife. She took a chance on a rugged ex-felon, to love him and to believe in him. I'll never forget the time when she summarized for me the role she'd play in my life. I had been sharing with her how the Lord had created me to be a public figure, that I would travel and speak and that'd I'd be on several platforms fulfilling God's calling in my life. She, however, is shy and not public in the least. But she said this: "While you're speaking to people, all I want to do is hold your microphone." And that's when I knew she was the one!

Second, there is my Board of Directors: Guillermo Quinones, Joe Carrillo, David Coley, and David Constante. When I brought this ministry's incorporation to them, they threw their support behind it. They believed in the Blueprint vision and are why our newsletter, Blueprints, is a reality today. They serve, help, inspire, and encourage me in all that I do. They are the counsel that brings me wisdom, and this ministry is alive and well because of them.

Third, there are all the unnamed folks who financially support us in the little donations they offer here and there. Our expenses are small, but they are present nonetheless, and we would not be able to print material and publish books sent to inmates without them. Thank you all.



# Introduction

---

Everyone has a blueprint.

We all have a unique makeup, with a personality of our own and a set of skills, talents, and gifts that God has given us, along with things we have developed along the way of life. Unfortunately, most of us didn't know that our personal design was not bulletproof.

As the Enemy of our soul, Satan has formed every weapon possible to prevent us from knowing what we were created for and how to steward the things God has placed within us. Because we were created in the image of God, we were designed to reflect that image, but due to our inherent rebellious nature and the ungodly cultures surrounding us, we squandered our original intent for living.

We defaced our blueprint.

Thankfully, though, God has a plan! He has sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to destroy the works of the Devil (1 Jn. 3:8) and reconnect us with the Father. Because of what Jesus has done, we are no longer children of wrath (Eph. 2:3), and we have power to do what is right (Rom. 6:14). Not only can we come to the throne of grace to obtain mercy and help in time of need (Heb. 4:16), but we are now able to reflect God's image as we are being transformed one day at a time (2 Cor. 3:18).

We can now know our blueprint.

However, before we understand our design, we must seek the Lord for His. Before we know ourselves, we must know the Him, for only He can truly reveal who we are. Our lives are designed to reflect His glory, so no matter how much we learn about our individual makeup, if we don't know God, we can't know anything else (cf. 1 Jn. 4:19).

We must know His blueprint for living.

This handbook you now hold in your hands will show you just that. It will walk you through five major blueprints God has recorded in His Word. These blueprints are: the blueprint of God's image, the blueprint of gender design, the blueprint of marriage, the blueprint of the church, and the blueprint of discipleship. Below is the summary:

### **The Blueprint of God's Image**

God created man and woman in His image. Here, we review four aspects of His image and how humanity was designed to reveal those qualities in everyday living. Also, we will learn what it means to possess dominion.

### **The Blueprint of Gender Design**

Connected to the image of God is the male and female gender, and here we learn what it means to be designed in the masculine and feminine image of God. Specifically, our focus will be on God's original intent for males and females.

### **The Blueprint of Marriage**

After learning about the masculine and feminine image, we continue our lesson by looking at how marriage was designed to exist. We will define Holy Matrimony from a biblical viewpoint and learn about its purpose and picture.

### **The Blueprint of the Church**

Having learned about God's image and how that image is reflected in the masculine and feminine form, we draw our attention to the Church and her spiritual role. Careful attention is paid to her bridal role.

### **The Blueprint of Discipleship**

Finally, we arrive at the Great Commission. Jesus commanded us to make disciples of all nations, and we learn about discipleship by looking to His and the apostle Paul's example. We especially look to Paul's model for discipleship and learn its practical application.

This handbook is not intended to offer an intricate treatise on design nor present a lengthy discussion on God's will for your life. It is a simple reading that addresses God's blueprint for living. Once you understand His design, then you'll be able to understand yours.

Each chapter will begin with an introduction to the blueprint under discussion, and it will be followed by a brief commentary on the topic. Chapter highlights are provided, and a Definition and Discussion section will enhance topical understanding. Lastly, a Digging for Discovery section that allows for group discussion or personal study will complete the chapter.

So, get ready to read some basic instructions on God's blueprint for living!





# ***Chapter One***

## **The Blueprint of God's Image**

---

*"Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness.'"*  
(Gen. 1:26a)

---

### **INTRODUCTION**

Before God spoke the material universe into existence, He had a plan. Reading Genesis chapter one, we see God's grand masterpiece come into existence, and in chapter two, which records the details of the sixth day of creation, we learn of what man is composed: a material and an immaterial substance (Gen. 2:7).

The human form has a physical side (the body) and a spiritual side (the spirit and soul). The physical body is merely a vehicle which is driven by the spirit and the soul. It is as the apostle Paul called it, an instrument (cf. Rom. 6:13). It can only do those things which the spirit and soul compel it to do. The spirit of a person is the principle of life which is created in the image of God; it is the driving force of a person. The soul, on the other hand, is the animating element which is the outworking of the spirit. It is composed of mind, will, and emotions. If the spirit is the fan motor of a man, the soul is the air it produces. These all reflect God's image.

For us to live as we were created to live, we must understand the image we were created in. Once we understand the image, we'll understand our behavior. In other words, we only behave in keeping with the images we wish to uphold.

### **I. THE NATURE OF GOD'S IMAGE**

In Genesis 1:26, we read that God has created us in His image, so let's talk about the nature of an image. What is image? The Hebrew word used in this verse is tselem (*tseh'-lem*); it is "a masculine noun meaning an image, a likeness, a statue, a model, a drawing, a shadow" (*Hebrew-Greek Key Word Study Bible*). How interesting that we are created as a "model" of God. This means our being contains certain things which resemble our Creator.

However, we are not god-like; we are not little divine beings. Imagine a model car, for instance. It may be tiny reflection of a real car, possessing all the "parts" of the real thing, but it is merely a reflection of it. It is not an actual car, only a model of it. In like manner, we are created to model God, to reflect His nature. We aren't god-like, but we are to be *like* God in at least four ways which reflect His nature: spiritual, intellectual, relational, and moral.

### *The Spiritual Image of God*

The Bible tells us that God is a formless Being (Deut. 4:15). He is Spirit (In. 4:24). We see that we are spiritual beings, because we all possess the breath of life (cf. Job 33:4). What this means is that God operates at the spiritual level first, then He manifests His works in the physical. Therefore, we are to focus our efforts in glorifying God by basing them in the spiritual realm.

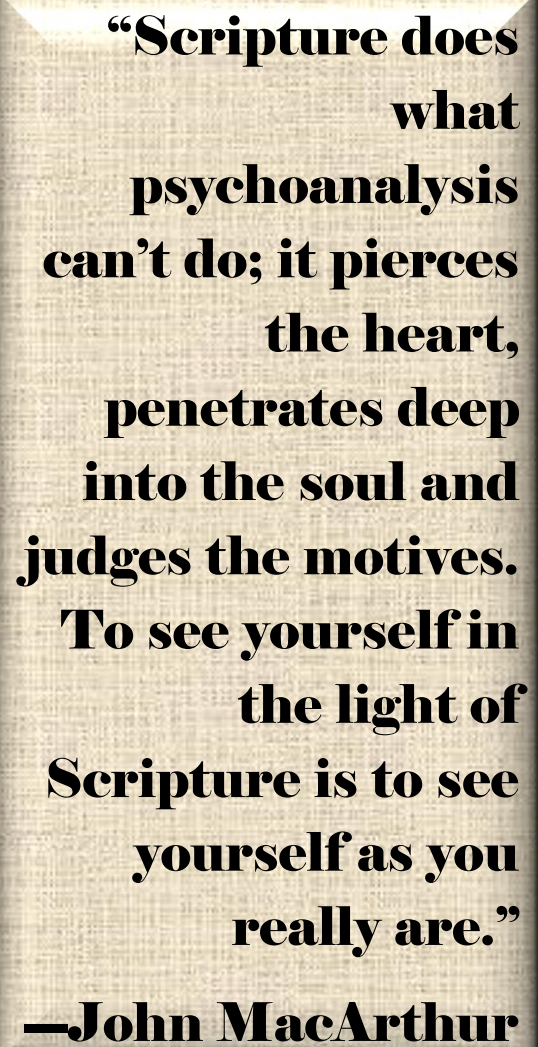
### *The Intellectual Image of God*

God thinks. He plans and is very intentional in all that He does. His thoughts and His ways are far above ours (Is. 55:8-9). He isn't randomly doing things for the sheer sake of entertaining Himself. His is strategic and calculating (cf. Is. 46:8-11). As His image bearers, we also must be thoughtful in all that we. He's given the ability to reason and to plan. This facet of our being is designed to follow in the footsteps of our Creator. We are to think like God.

### *The Relational Image of God*

God is all about relationship, for He is the God of love (cf. 1 Jn. 4:8). Love involves a subject and an object. The subject loves an object. Our triune God is love by His very nature. The Father loves the Son, and the Son loves the Father. The Spirit loves them both, and They love Him in return.

God is relationship! He created us in love and for love; therefore, we are to emulate His love (cf. Jer. 31:3). He is the relationship-building business, and we must be so, too.



**“Scripture does  
what  
psychoanalysis  
can’t do; it pierces  
the heart,  
penetrates deep  
into the soul and  
judges the motives.  
To see yourself in  
the light of  
Scripture is to see  
yourself as you  
really are.”**  
**—John MacArthur**



### *The Moral Image of God*

There has always been and will always be an absolute right and an absolute wrong. Moral absolutes are rooted in God's Being. Our inherent sense of right and wrong (also called our conscience) is inscribed into our spiritual DNA, because it is part of God's being as well. Societies across the world form various governments and pass hundreds of laws to protect its citizens because humans possess an innate sense of right and wrong. We have a moral compass because God has given us one.

Aside from these four facets of God's image we are to reflect, we also possess His image in gender form: male and female. A man was created in the masculine image of God, and a woman was created in the feminine image of God. Each has its own blueprint for living, making them different and unique. Both are equal in their value as human beings, but they express their value in different ways. We'll learn more about them in the next chapter. Here, we'll finish this chapter with what God's image was designed to provide us with.

## **II. THE STEWARDSHIP OF HUMANITY**

Now that we know a little more about the image of God, let's dig a little into God's design for us.

*“let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”*  
(Gen. 1:26b)

When God created the universe, He had a plan in mind. Everything in existence has a reason for being here. Even stars have a purpose (Ps. 19:1-4)! It makes sense that if God made stars for a reason, then He placed everything here on earth for a reason as well.

Adam and Eve were created in the image of God and were given a life-long assignment. They were given rulership, the authority to rule and govern over all the earth and the animals placed in it. The Hebrew for dominion is *radaw* (*raw-daw*), and it means “to have dominion, prevail against, reign” (*Hebrew-Greek Word Study Bible*). Individually, they were given a personal stewardship, which we'll discuss in the next chapter, but their general stewardship was to have dominion.

We were created to rule.

The question is, how? The answer lies in the image. Because we were created in the image of God, we are designed to reflect that image, and we are designed to reflect it, then the way we were designed to rule is connected to that image.

We were designed to rule according to the image. We were created to rule like God, spiritually, intellectually, relationally, and morally. Each facet of God's image is what we have within us as well, and it not only serves as the framework of our existence, but it is also offers us a standard of conduct to follow.

We were designed to rule in the image of God.

## Chapter One Highlights

### *The Blueprint of God's Image*

1. We are all born as spiritual and physical beings.
2. We possess body, spirit, and soul.
3. The soul consists of mind, will, and emotion.
4. God's image is seen in four ways.
  - a. Spiritual
  - b. Intellectual
  - c. Relational
  - d. Moral
5. We are all given the stewardship to rule (to have dominion), and God's image (spiritual, intellectual, relational, and moral) provides us with a model for how we are to manage that stewardship.

## Definitions and Discussion

1. **Blueprint:** a design plan or other technical drawing

Buildings are created in an architect's mind and drawn up for construction. This places a great emphasis on strict adherence to the architect's blueprint. What would happen if construction workers didn't read the blueprint correctly?

---

---

2. **Stewardship:** the job of supervising or taking care of something

If you loaned someone something that belongs to you, how you would expect them to care for your belonging?

---

---

3. According to 1 Peter 2:9, we are God's own possession, and the apostle Paul also tells us that our body belongs to God (1 Cor. 3:16); therefore, it is clear that our entire existence is borrowed to us from God. As such, what does this say about our need to faithful stewards?

---

---

## Digging for Discovery

The following questions are designed to help you better understand the material covered in the lesson. You can use them for group discussion or for personal study.



1. The human soul consists of mind, will, and emotions. In Romans 12:2, the apostle Paul tells us to "not be conformed to this world." In what ways have you conformed your soul (mind, will, and emotions) to this world?

---

---

2. How can you "be transformed by the renewing of your mind"?

---

---

3. We learned about four facets of God's image: spiritual, intellectual, relational, and moral. Which of these did you find most interesting and why?

---

---

4. The stewardship of humanity is written in our spiritual DNA. Describe it in your own words.

---

---

5. What was the image of God designed to provide us with?

---

---

6. Identify one *negative* image you've been ruling in and explain where you learned that image from.

---

---

---



# *Chapter Two*

## **The Blueprint of Gender Design**

---

*“So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him, male and female He created them.”*  
(Genesis 1:27)

---

### **INTRODUCTION**

Our world has become increasingly relativistic with its morality. In other words, there are no clear standards for right and wrong, because everyone has a morality of their own. What’s true for them is what’s true for them, they say, and no one has the right to “judge” them.

This has affected a lot of areas of our society, but the one that’s been affected most radically is human sexuality. According to a recent Google search, there are now 112 genders!<sup>1</sup> Sadly, there are some churches who believe this gender hype and reject God’s dual image of male and female. They say that sex and gender are two different things. Consider the following explanation:

What is the difference between the terms sex and gender? Both terms are very closely related, and it is quite difficult to distinguish the exact meaning of the terms. However, by no means is sex and gender the same though people use these two words thinking that they are synonyms. Gender is a set of characteristics that are seen to distinguish between male and female, whereas sex is either of two divisions, male and female. Sex is usually determined by the anatomy of a person. If you delve deeply into the concepts sex and gender, you will find out that a female who is named thus due to the anatomy of the body could have male characteristics such as preferring rough sports, body strength, etc. While sex is biological, gender is posed by the society. . .

- Sex depends on the anatomy. Gender depends on the society or culture.
- Male and female are sex categories. Masculine and feminine are gender categories.
- Sex characteristics do not vary substantially between different human societies. Gender characteristics do vary greatly between different human societies.<sup>2</sup>

So, our sex is determined by what body parts God gives us, but gender is whatever we want it to be? If God gives me a male part, but I feel like a girl, then I will live my life as a girl and demand the laws of the land change to reflect my feelings. Do you see the problem there?

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://dudeasks.com/how-many-genders-are-there-in-2019/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.differencebetween.com/difference-between-sex-and-gender/>

The reason there are so many alleged genders is because people are now defining themselves by how they “feel,” as opposed to identifying themselves with their Creator. Feelings are the new standard. Whatever you feel is good for you is ok. Society will place a gender label on you, and eventually laws will be passed to accommodate your new self. Worse, we are now legislating feelings and codifying laws to erroneously validate someone's feelings.

In this lesson, we are going to return to God’s original design for humanity. In His plan, there aren’t multiple genders. There are only male and female.

**“The greatest  
charity one can  
do to another is  
lead him to the  
truth.”**

**—St. Thomas  
Aquinas**

## **I. THE MASCULINE IMAGE**

In Genesis 2:8, we see that after God created Adam, He "put" him in the garden of Eden. Interestingly, the Hebrew used for “put” here is *siym* (pronounced *seem*); it is "a verb meaning to appoint, to bring, to call, to put, to change, to charge, to commit, to consider, to convey, to determine" (*Hebrew-Greek Key Word Study Bible*). It's clear from this word alone that God has a specific role for Adam to fulfill.

God's appointed Adam to do something in the garden, and we see what his tasks are in verse 15: "Then the Lord God took the man and put him in the garden to tend and keep it." God created Adam from the dust (Gen. 2:7), appointed him to "tend" and "keep" the garden of Eden and everything else under the sun. He was responsible for the garden, the animals, and, eventually, the woman God would soon bring into his life.

The verb “tend” means *to work, to serve*, and the verb keep means *to watch, to keep, to preserve, to guard, to be careful, to watch over, to watch carefully over, to be on one's guard* (*Hebrew-Greek Key Word Study Bible*). By design, men are to be workers and protectors. They don't sit and watch life pass them by; they get engaged and make things happen. Another interesting meaning is Adam's name; it means "to show blood (in the face)" (*Hebrew-Greek Key Word Study Bible*).

Without spiritualizing this meaning too much, we can see that Adam (and all men, by extension) was created to "show blood" in all that they do. What does this mean? Leviticus 17:11 gives us a clue: "For the life of the flesh is in the blood..." Life is in the blood. Men are filled with life; they are the ones who have the seed of life stored within their very bodies. It's their job to "show" life in all that they do.



The masculine image of God is designed to work, to serve, to guard, to protect, and to watch over carefully, because men were created to impart and preserve life in every aspect of their lives. They reflect God spiritually, intellectually, relationally, and morally by treasuring life more than anything.

Our ultimate example of manhood is Jesus, and because we are created in His image, we are wise to emulate the examples He modeled for us to follow:

- A loving servant (Mk. 10:45; Eph. 5:22-29)
- An interceding priest (Jn. 17:1-26)
- An instructional prophet (Jn. 4:5-42)
- A ruling king (Rev. 19:11-16)

## **II. THE FEMININE IMAGE**

In Genesis 2:18, we see God's design for a woman. She is created to be man's "helper comparable to him." The King James Version says she is a "help meet." The word help here means "aid" and is derived from a root word which means "to surround, i.e., protect or aid." Women are designed to aid men by surrounding them (kind of like a rib surrounds and protects the heart?). They are also a *meet*, which means "a front, i.e., part opposite" and is derived from a root word which means "to tell, to report, to make known, to explain, to be reported."

Women are also designed to stand as a man's "other half," that part which is opposite to him. She is nothing like him in his masculinity; she is pure femininity. Pure woman. And in being a woman, she aids him by making known to him the things he needs to know, things he can't discern on his own. She is to explain as well. She gives him reasons for good decision making, which will help him better impart and protect life, for himself, for her, and for others.

Women are created to help men with their amazing ability to talk! Aside from all the gender jokes and stereotypes which can be made from this, their strength is in their communication. Women bond through communication, while men bond through activity (through work). That's just how God made us.

The feminine image of God is designed to aid and be an opposite to the masculine image, and in being his opposite she surrounds and protects the life he imparts to her (kind of like she does when she brings a fetus to full term?). Women are nourishers and

sustainers of life. They are to reflect God spiritually, intellectually, relationally, and morally by being a man's opposite and helping him make wise decisions.

Scripture has plenty to say about godly femininity, women are also created in the image of God; they are just as important as men are in God's plan. Below are a few examples of what a woman could pursue in reflecting God's image:

- A virtuous wife (Pro. 31:10-31)
- A compassionate mother (Is. 49:15)
- A devoted daughter (Ruth 1:16, 17)
- An incorruptible beauty (1 Peter 3:1-6)

When we return to the image of God, we get a lot of things correct. We especially understand what it means to be male and female. The entire gender debate that is popular today is rooted in a misunderstanding of who we are as God's creation. Most of society has abandoned God's moral code, and every time we set aside His morality, we automatically invent one of our own.

Sadly, our world is steeped in uncertainty, confusion, anger, bitterness, and wounds, because most people don't want to be healed on God's terms. They want to fix themselves on their own. And the more we fix ourselves the more harm inflict.

May we all see the need to return to our Creator.

## Chapter Two Highlights

### *The Blueprint of Gender Design*

1. The masculine image
  - a. A loving servant
  - b. An interceding priest
  - c. An instructional prophet
  - d. A ruling king
  
2. The feminine image
  - a. A virtuous wife
  - b. A compassionate mother
  - c. A devoted daughter
  - d. An incorruptible beauty

## Definitions and Discussion

1. The architect of our lives is God. He designed us with specific goals in mind and sexuality is included in that plan. What happens when the goal for sex is not honored?

---

---

2. Moral Absolute: a standard against which the morality of action can be judged. In today's world, moral absolutes are frowned upon. Yet God's design for life is inextricably linked to a set standard that cannot be moved. Just as a can opener was designed for a specific use, so are we. Regarding sexuality, can you list one example of how we were designed to function and what happens when we violate that design?

---

---

---

---

3. List three morals that society has changed and what the consequence has been.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Digging for Discovery

The following questions are designed to help you better understand the material covered in the lesson. You can use them for group discussion or for personal study.



1. According to the definitions cited in this chapter, what is the difference between sex and gender?

---

---

2. In your opinion, why do you think our society has become obsessed with creating gender categories and demanding the courts make laws to recognize them?

---

---

3. Can you find something in the Bible that speaks to this subject? If so, write it down and explain your thoughts on it.

---

---

4. The world has done a horrible job at defining manhood. Write down how manhood is defined by our society.

---

---

5. What does the Bible say a man is supposed to do and be?

---

---

6. Women are also misunderstood from an original intent perspective. Write down how society measures womanhood.

---

---

7. What does the Bible say a woman is supposed to do and be?

---

---



# Chapter Three

## The Blueprint of Marriage

---

*“But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him. And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh in its place. Then the rib which the Lord God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man.”*  
(Genesis 2:20-22)

---

### INTRODUCTION

In the beginning, God created one man and one woman. He created them for each other. One man for one woman, and one woman for one man. In the beginning, there wasn't moral confusion or identity disorders or gender dysphoria. There was only one man and one woman. They knew their sex and gender. And they knew Holy Matrimony was God's plan.

But on June 26, 2015, the United States Supreme Court legalized same-sex marriage. After decades of civil rights mania, the High Court declared that it is unconstitutional to forbid homosexuals from marrying one another. As a result, the gender list is growing more each year it seems. One Google search says the list of genders was 63 and 81<sup>3</sup> while another one says there are 112<sup>4</sup>.

Many people wonder why there is so much confusion and chaos, whether it's in the political arena, the workplace, the home, or the church. But make no mistake, when we remove the Ultimate standard from our lives and start inventing ones of our own, there will always be madness. James said it like this: “For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there” (Jas. 3:16).

### I. The Importance of Heterosexual Monogamy

In a world filled and governed by selfish gain and carnal appetites, humanity has lost its moral compass. No one can say what's right or wrong anymore, because, as Isaiah had written over 2,500 years ago, our society has completely reversed God's moral order, calling evil good and good evil (Is. 5:20). Homosexuality is now trending like a new pair of Nike shoes.

---

<sup>3</sup> <https://apath.org/63-genders/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://dudeasks.com/how-many-genders-are-there-in-2019/>

But God didn't design us like that. He didn't intend for us to be homosexual but heterosexual. He didn't create a man to be with a man or a woman to be with a woman. He didn't make us homosexual. He made us *heterosexual*, male desiring female and vice versa. And He made us for monogamous relationships, one man for one woman. Marriage, then, as God designed it is important for several reasons, and here are at least four reasons: It's biblical, biological, purposeful, and pictorial.

#### *It's Biblical*

God's prescription for marriage allows males and females to complement each other sexually, spiritually, and emotionally. This may come a shock to some people, but when God says we're supposed to do something or to act a certain way it means we should abide by it! Short and simple: God's way is the best. He created us in His image; therefore, He knows what's best for us. He designed us intentionally, to serve a specific purpose. So, when we deviate from that purpose, we abuse ourselves and others.

If a can opener was designed to open cans, then how much sense would it make if we used it to secure nails into a wall? We may succeed in securing nails into a wall, but we'd abuse it. And with repeated use, we'd destroy it. Same thing with our human design. God made us a certain way and for a specific reason; therefore, we "function" best when we live according to our design. We might succeed in living other ways, but eventually we will hurt ourselves and others. Worse, we may end up in hell, eternally separated from God.

#### *It's Biological*

The human body was created with body parts that have specific functions. Those functions are unique to its part. For example, a heart pumps blood throughout the body. It doesn't eliminate waste and toxins like the liver. Doctors would be totally remiss for trying to make a heart act like a liver. Hearts are designed to pump blood, not eliminate toxins from the body. This isn't a discriminatory statement. It's a biological fact.

The same goes for marriage. It was designed a certain way. Men have a role and so do women, and these roles are partially reflected in their anatomy. Males have a life-giving reproductive organ and women have a nursing womb. They each play a specific role the other doesn't. It's completely outside the realm of logic to expect a man to give

**“Marriage is the capstone of the family, the building block of human civilization. A society that does not honor and protect marriage undermines its very existence.”**

**—John MacArthur**



birth to a child when he isn't biologically equipped to do that. Therefore, homosexuality is biologically wrong.

### *It's Purposeful*

When God began His plan for humanity, he brought Adam and Eve together to form a one-flesh unit. He made them to procreate and fill the earth. He uniquely designed their bodies to make this possible. A man cannot get pregnant and therefore cannot propagate humanity. He needs a woman for that. Likewise, a woman can't make her own babies. She needs a man for that.

God's design for marriage is to produce, populate, and preside. We make children; we populate the earth; and we rule over it. That's the stewardship of humanity. Males and females come together in holy matrimony and fulfill God's purpose on earth. Homosexuality, then, defeats that purpose. Two men cannot produce a child, and neither can two women. A man needs a woman, and a woman needs a man. This is God's purpose.

### *It's Pictorial*

The plan of salvation is simple: God sends His only begotten Son to redeem us. In this redemptive plan, He not only adopts us into His family and makes us His children, but we also become the Bride of Christ. God's design for marriage is not only biblical, biological, and purposeful, but it also portrays our relationship to Jesus. The apostle Paul wrote extensively on this subject (Eph. 5:22-33), and even John records this truth in Revelation 21. The picture of the Church being the Bride is clear. We are His chosen Bride, and He is our Beloved Husband.

When seen this way, heterosexual monogamy within the context of holy matrimony makes perfect sense. Marriage between one man and one woman pictures our relationship to Jesus. To distort marriage and make it stand as whatever we want is to completely defile the sacred image that it portrays of our relationship to Christ. God's design for marriage must be between one man and one woman, or else we defile the image of God for it.

## Chapter Three Highlights

### *The Blueprint of Marriage*

1. Marriage is between one man and one woman.
2. Sexual confusion is the result of what James called “envy, self-seeking” (Jas. 3:16).
3. Heterosexual marriage (one man with one woman) reflects God’s image and has four reasons for its existence:
  - a. It’s biblical
  - b. It’s biological
  - c. It’s purposeful
  - d. It’s pictorial
4. Marriage is honorable and amazingly reveals to the world what God intended for humanity.

## Definitions and Discussion

1. Marriage: the legally or formally recognized union of two people as partners in a personal relationship (historically and in some jurisdictions specifically a union between a man and a woman). In God's eyes, marriage is always and will always be between one man and one woman. This is His design. It's His blueprint. What happens when that blueprint is violated?

---

---

---

2. Violating a blueprint always results in a distorted product or service. The end product may still "function." but it will not exist according to the architect's plan. Marriage is no different. Jot down some thought below and begin a discussion regarding why it is important to abide by God's design for marriage. Do not just include thoughts on homosexuality but also on fornication in general.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

3. What are some ways you can abide by God's design for marriage even now as you are incarcerated?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Digging for Discovery

The following questions are designed to help you better understand the material covered in the lesson. You can use them for group discussion or for personal study.



1. In your own words, why do you think our country has become so anti-Christian?

---

---

2. Where do you think anti-Christian attitudes come from and when do they begin?

---

---

3. Why is it important to understand our design?

---

---

4. Of the four reasons for marriage we covered in this chapter, which one do you like best and why?

---

---

5. What can hinder someone from returning to God's design?

---

---

---

---

---

# **Chapter Four**

## **The Blueprint of the Church**

---

*“Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together or a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.”*  
(Ephesians 2:19-22)

---

### **INTRODUCTION**

“Almost three-quarters of Americans (73%) say they are a Christian,” says a Barna research study<sup>5</sup>. That sounds nice, but the *U.S. News & World Report* said that the religious population decreased by 8% between 2007 and 2014, while during that same period Muslim conversions grew<sup>6</sup>. Even more alarming, a new group of people categorized as “religious nones” are becoming more popular as time progresses. The study said this:

But unlike the global projections, the U.S. has seen, and will continue to see, a rise of the “religious none.” A larger portion of the nation’s population describes themselves as religiously unaffiliated, jumping up 7 percent from 2007 to 2014. And unlike other countries, religiously unaffiliated people in the U.S. tend to be younger than those who belong to a religious group.<sup>7</sup>

Considering these studies, we wonder what’s happening to the Church. We can speculate and offer various thoughts on this, but the apostle Paul already told us this was going to happen:

“Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons.”  
(1 Tim. 4:1)

“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.”  
(2 Tim. 4:3, 4)

---

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.barna.com/research/state-church-2016/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/articles/2017-04-11/americans-are-becoming-less-religious>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/articles/2017-04-11/americans-are-becoming-less-religious>

The truth is, not only will many fall away from the faith, but many do not understand the nature of it, much less what exactly is the Church of Jesus Christ. A vast number of alleged Christians think that attending a church is the same as *being* the church. These nominal Christians are not only mistaken in their belief but are also partly responsible for why our society's moral compass is broken.

### **I. The Church is Confessional by Nature**

When the Lord Jesus walked the earth, He radically changed the nature of religion. He didn't come to do away with it (cf. Mat. 5:17) but to clarify it. After choosing His disciples, He taught them many things and performed countless miracles to authenticate His message and Person. One day, He posed them with a question: "Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" (Matt. 16:13) After God revealed to Peter who Jesus was, the nature of the Church was announced. It was introduced by a confession:

"You are the Christ, the Son of the living  
God."  
(Matt. 16:16)

Later, the apostle Peter said, "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name given under heaven among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12), and Paul said that "if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. 10:9,10). It's clear, then, that one becomes a Christian through confession of who Jesus and what He has done.

Upon salvation, saints are spiritually united into the *ecclesia*, the church. They are "baptized into one body" (1 Cor. 12:13) and become "members of the household of God" (Eph. 2:19). They are sealed by the Spirit (2 Cor. 1:21, 22; Eph. 1:13, 14) and begin the three-stage process of their salvation, beginning at justification and carried through sanctification, until they arrive at glorification (Rom. 8:28-30). This process is guaranteed because of what Christ has done at the Cross (Col. 2:11-15) and because of what He's doing at the right hand of the Father (Rom. 8:34; Heb. 8:1-6; 1 Jn. 2:1).

**"The real test of  
the saint is not  
preaching the  
Gospel, but  
washing disciples'  
feet, that is, doing  
the things that do  
not count in the  
estimation of men  
but count  
everything in the  
estimate of God."**

**—Oswald  
Chambers**

Composed of individual members, the Church edifies itself through the various functions Christ sovereignly assigned to them (Rom. 12:3-8; 1 Cor. 12:4-26; Eph. 4:11-16; 1 Peter 4:10, 11). Spiritual growth and maturity are reached through the process of discipleship, following the examples of Christ and Paul (Lk. 9:23; Jn. 12:24-26; Acts 14:21-23; 20:17-35; 1 Cor. 4:14-17; Phil. 2:19-24). This, we are all commanded to follow (1 Cor. 11:1).

As such, every believer is a member of God's family and is assigned a function in Christ's Body. Each function has an authority attached to it, the right and power to act as they were designed to. These are the individual stewardships Jesus appoints to His saints. The following bullet list summarizes these truths:

- Every member must submit to the process of discipleship.
- Through discipleship, members learn of their stewardship.
- As stewards, they learn of their gifts and talents and the authority each one has.
- Once discovered, these gifts and talents are used to edify the Body.
- Through corporate and personal edification, God is glorified.

As you can see, being a Christian is a lot more than signing up for a religious program or faithfully attending a local church. It's an active search for God that involves we engage in transparent relationships with other believers. It's about submitting to the process of discipleship and of allowing us to be held accountable.

## **II. The Church is a Consecrated Body**

As a confessional body of believers, the Church is also set apart from the world. The apostle Paul wrote to the Roman church that we are to "present our bodies a living sacrifice" and that we are to not be "conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Rom. 12:1, 2).

The Church is a holy assembly. It is a called-out group of people who "are a chosen generation, a holy nation" (1 Peter 2:9a). Our purpose for existing as a body is to "proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9b). We are to stand out as light and salt (Matt. 5:13, 14) and expose darkness (Eph. 5:11). Through the various gifts Christ has assigned to us, we "speak the truth in love" so that we "may grow up in all things into Him who is the head" (Eph. 4:15, 16).

### **III. The Church Communicates God's Glory**

Because we are created in the image of God, and through that image we glorify Him, the Church also is to reflect the image of Jesus Christ, because we are His body. What Jesus did while He walked the earth 2,000 years ago, we are to continue to do as His spiritual body. This is the supreme goal of the Church.

The apostle Paul told the Ephesian church that he was “to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery” (Eph. 3:9), “the mystery which has been hidden from all ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints...which is Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Col. 1:26,27). This mystery is the “manifold wisdom of God” and is designed to “be made known by the church” (Eph. 3:10).

### **IV. The Church is a Virtuous Wife**

The Church of Jesus Christ is not only birthed through confession, consecrated by vocation, and is designed to communicate God's glory as a corporate body, but she is also a Wife. She is the Bride of Christ.

As such, we can look to the Proverbs 31 wife and get an example of what a good wife looks like. There are numerous examples we can learn from this text, but below are a few we do well to consider:

- She is a servant.
- She respects her husband.
- She teaches her children about God.
- She cares for her body.
- She works.
- She is a homemaker.
- She is good with time.

Whatever the virtuous wife does is what the Church should emulate. All the qualities Solomon says she displays should be the things the Body of Christ should reflect as well. Jesus is our Husband, and He sanctified and cleansed us with His Word so that we might not have “spot or wrinkle or any such thing” (Eph. 5:27).

Our purpose as a redeemed Body is clear. His blueprint is stamped into our spirit. We are confessional. We are consecrated. We communicate His glory. And we serve as a virtuous wife.



## Chapter Four Highlights

### *The Blueprint of the Church*

1. The Church is a spiritual organism not a physical building.
2. The Church is confessional:
  - a. We become part of the **Body of Christ** by repentance and confession.
3. The Church is a consecrated body:
  - a. We are called out of the world to be set apart from the world.
4. The Church communicates God's glory:
  - a. We are called to make known God's image through the Great Commission (evangelism and discipleship)
5. The Church is a virtuous wife:
  - a. We are a holy **Bride** called to conduct ourselves honorable and in a manner worthy of **His** name.

## Definitions and Discussion

1. Fellowship: friendly association, especially with people who share one's interest  
God created for us fellowship. From day one, we were walking in fellowship with  
God and with one another (cf. Gen. 3:8). As such, we were not designed to be  
alone. What happens when we reject fellowship with others?

---

---

---

2. Proverbs 18:1 says that we rage against all wise judgment when we seek isolation,  
yet still we see many make excuses for why they don't "go to church" or why they  
don't fellowship with the fellow believers. Reflect on this and jot down some  
thoughts below and begin a discussion for why this practice continues.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

3. What happens when we seek fellowship more with the world than we do with the  
church?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Digging for Discovery

The following questions are designed to help you better understand the material covered in the lesson. You can use them for group discussion or for personal study.



1. Before you read this chapter, what did you think the church was?

---

---

2. What's the difference between going to church and *being* the church?

---

---

---

3. In what ways can the Church remain consecrated (holy)? And in what ways can she defile herself?

---

---

---

4. How can the Church communicate God's glory?

---

---

---

5. In Galatians 5:9, the apostle Paul said, "A little leaven leavens the whole lump." What does this mean, and how can that be applied to the Church?

---

---

---

---



# **Chapter Five**

## **The Blueprint of Discipleship, Part One**

---

*“And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen.’”*  
(Matthew 28:18-20)

---

### **INTRODUCTION**

When Adam sinned and introduced death into the world (cf. Rom. 5:12), humanity was born disconnected from God and began a lifelong struggle against God, self, and others. We are born rebels and don't like to be told what to do. Because of Original Sin, we are savage by birth and don't like rules.

As parents, we know instinctively to discipline our children, because experience tells us that our little ones don't automatically do the right thing. We know that if we don't discipline them, they will become unruly teens and ruthless adults. A well-written article on this topic says this:

Discipline is not only good for children, it is necessary for their happiness and well-being. Discipline is as vital for healthy child development as nutritious food, physical and cognitive exercises, love, and other basic needs. Without discipline, children lack the tools necessary to navigate relationships and challenges in life such as self-discipline, respect for others, and the ability to cooperate with peers.

Contrary to what some parents may mistakenly believe, children who are not regularly disciplined are not happy. In fact, failure to discipline children often results in kids who are unhappy, angry, and even resentful. To those around him, a child who is not disciplined will be unpleasant company, and a child without discipline may find it difficult to make friends.<sup>8</sup>

What is true of children and the need for them to be disciplined is true of us as followers of Christ. Once we enter the family of God, we need discipline, training, instruction, etc. Prior to being saved, we were influenced by the world and its ungodly culture, and it requires a steady diet of godly training to learn the ways of the Lord. We simply cannot reflect the image of God without it.

In this final blueprint, we will examine Jesus' command to discipleship and Paul's example of it. Pay close attention, because this blueprint is the one that will enable you to

---

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.verywellfamily.com/surprising-reasons-why-we-need-to-discipline-children-620115>

learn the previous four. Without solid training and instruction, we cannot learn God's image, because we'll be focused on enhancing our own. And, as we learned in chapter one, if the image is wrong, all else will be as well.

## **I. Jesus Commands Discipleship**

The Great Commission is listed in Matthew 28:18-20. This is the command that we all engage in the process of discipling one another. After Jesus was raised from the dead and spent a few weeks with His disciples, He was ready to return to the Father. And of all the ways He could have issued a farewell, He began with a thought on authority. He didn't begin with the Law or with love or with a parable. He opened His mouth and said, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth" (Matt. 28:18).

Authority is what we lost in the Garden of Eden, and authority is what Jesus regained in the Garden of Gethsemane. When Adam disobeyed God's will, he plunged us all into sin. But when Jesus obeyed the God's will, He opened the door to eternal life with God (cf. Rom. 5:12-19).

It is quite fitting, then, that the Lord would remind His disciples that He restored what we lost. We were created to have authority, to rule and reign over God's creation, but we forfeited that right to rule because of our disobedience.

For us to be living blueprints, we must walk in the authority God has secured for us at Calvary. We don't have authority on our own but only in Jesus. Adam and Eve had authority, but they lost it. In Christ, we have authority again, but only in His name and to the extent that we remain obedient.

The authority (the right and the power) to advance the kingdom of God is based on Jesus' perfect life and the sacrifice He offered on our behalf. It must be done in His name! We cannot further His work here on earth while remaining disobedient to His written plan for the Church. Without obedience, we have no power (cf. Acts 19:13-16). We can only exercise true spiritual authority when we remain obedient to the Word.

The key to avoiding an ungodly exercise of authority is to remember these four things:

1. It must be in keeping with the Word (Jn. 7:14-24).
2. It must be Spirit-led (Jn. 5:19).
3. It must be done in humility (Phil. 2:5-8).
4. It must be edifying (2 Cor. 10:8).

Furthermore, we must know that as children of God, we are always under authority. There is no such thing as a sovereign. Not a nation and not a person. We are all under the authority of God. The moment we embark on a quest to rid ourselves of authority we flirt with Lucifer's sin of wanting to be like God (cf. Is. 14:12-14).

**The Dynamics of Authority**  
**(“all authority has been given to Me”)**

To help us understand our role in relation to authority, we can remember that there are four authorities in our lives. There is state, ecclesiastical, civil, and home.

*State authority*

As citizens of any given country, we are bound by the laws of man. The apostle Paul said it best: “Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God” (Rom. 13:1). No one is free from this kind of authority.

*Ecclesiastical authority*

As saints, we are by the laws of the Church. This places all of us under the process of discipleship. The author of Hebrews said it like this: “Obey those who rule you, and be submissive, for they watch over your souls...” (Heb. 13:17). What the government is to the unbeliever, the Church is to the saint.

*Administrative authority*

As citizens and saints, we are bound by the policies and procedures of the workforce. Because we are commanded to work (2 Thess. 3:10), our employers become legitimate authority figures under state and ecclesiastical law. The apostle Paul said, “Bondservants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God” (Col. 3:22-23).

*Domestic authority*

As children, we are commanded to honor our father and mother (Eph. 6:1-3). As long we are under their care, we are to obey them. Our basic understanding of

**“The very word  
authority has within  
it the word author. An  
author is someone  
who creates and  
possesses a particular  
work. Insofar as God  
is the foundation of  
all authority, He  
exercises that  
foundation because  
He is the author and  
the owner of His  
creation. He is the  
foundation upon  
which all other  
authority stands or  
falls.”**

**—R.C. Sproul**

God and the world is formed in the home; that's why Paul commanded us wisely to raise our children "in the training and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4).

### **The Importance of Relationship ("go therefore and make disciples")**

Once we understand authority and submit ourselves accordingly, we can disciple others. Discipleship cannot occur where submission and authority are absent. There are many rogue saints who think they can disciple themselves, but they are wrong. If Jesus Himself submitted to God and to the laws of the land (cf. Heb. 5:8), who do we think we are that we can't do the same? There is no self-made man or woman. We all need others to teach and train us.

Forming relationships is what discipleship is about. The problem we encounter is that we have all experienced dysfunctional relationships, and we hesitate to give ourselves over to the care of a fellow saint, because if blood relatives abused us, how can we be assured fellow saints won't?

The fact is we won't be assured, but in Christ, we have strength, wisdom, His Word, and His indwelling Spirit to help us overcome any relational obstacle that comes our way. So, if discipleship is to occur, we must reconnect with God, with ourselves and with others.

#### *Reconnecting with God*

Before any earthly relationship can experience its intended fullness, we must first get reconnected to God. The apostle John said, "We love Him because He first loved us" (1 John 4:19). We can only give out what we have, so if we don't have a healthy relationship with God, then we'll give to others one of our own making.

#### *Reconnecting with Self*

When Adam sinned, he hid from God, because he was afraid and felt shame (cf. Gen. 3:10). He never knew fear or shame, but once he disobeyed, he experienced it. A broken relationship with God will produce a broken relationship with self. Emotional problems, mental disorders, and the like are all indications that people are broken within themselves, and they are broken with themselves because they are broken with God. Once we are whole, we can be whole with others.

#### *Reconnecting with Others*

The quality of our relationship with others is a direct reflection of our relationship with ourselves and with God. If we aren't right with God, we won't be right within ourselves, and if we aren't right with ourselves, we won't be right with others. Discipleship is all about connecting with others who are like you, following Christ and doing all possible to walk in His blueprint.

The command to make disciples is about forming relationships. Essentially, the Lord tells us to go make relationships with others. We can't get around this because we were created for relationship. Discipleship is relationship. We do well to submit to.



## **The Value of Obedience and Submission**

### **(“teaching them to observe all things I have commanded you”)**

In obedience to the Word, we are called to submit to the process of discipleship, which means coming under the tutelage of another brother- or sister-in-Christ. In each discipleship relationship, there must be at least five things present: initiative, transparency, instruction, accountability, prayer, and service.

As noted earlier, there is no self-made person. We all need somebody. The value of obedience and submission is stressed throughout Scripture and is exemplified in Christ Himself. Jesus was no rebel. He practiced what He preached.

- He submitted to His heavenly Father (Jn. 5:19).
- He submitted to His earthly parents (Lk. 2:51).
- He submitted to His co-laborer in the faith (Matt. 3:13-15).
- He submitted to His governing authorities (Matt. 17:24-278).
- He submitted to His spiritual authorities (Matt. 23:1-2).

Fulfilling the Great Commission is God’s will for all His children. This makes obedience and submission a central feature of our lives. Obedience is about doing what God commands of us, and submission is about the attitude of our heart. There is a difference!

Someone can “obey” the laws of God and still go to hell. Outward obedience is not what God is after. We see this when Jesus blasts the religious leaders in His day, telling them they “cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence” (Matt. 23:25). Because these people focused on external obedience yet maintained the wrong heart attitude, Jesus told them, “You are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead man’s bones and all uncleanness” (Matt. 23:27).

Therefore, as we seek to grow more in Christ and learn more about His blueprint for living, we are wise to ensure that our heart is in the right place. Doing right and being right are not always the same thing. Sometimes we can do the right thing for the wrong reason. That reason is rooted in the heart. It’s the motive that God sees. King David committed two horrible crimes, yet God forgave him and continued to bless him. He did so, because David had the right heart, one that is described as the prophet Samuel as “a man after [God’s] own heart” (1 Sam. 13:22). David was flawed, but he was devoted to the Lord in his heart.

That’s what God wants of us. Not just obedience, but loving submission to His Word. Once we commit ourselves to the Lord with all our heart, then we will learn His blueprint for living.



## Six Essentials for Effective Biblical Discipleship

1. **Initiative.** A sound, biblical discipleship relationship will always begin with a willingness to pursue people. God pursued Adam (Gen. 3:9), and Jesus pursued Matthew (9:9). Throughout Scripture, we see God and Jesus taking the initiative to restore others.
2. **Transparency.** For any relationship to flourish there must be present a desire for openness and honesty. Trust is developed over time, but it requires faith in what God can do through the process of a discipleship relationship.
3. **Instruction.** The relationship between Adam and God contained instructions (Gen.1:28-30), and Jesus taught His disciples as well. Discipleship relationships are instructive by nature.
4. **Accountability.** We need the Word of God to measure our growth, and through healthy relationships with other believers, we can use that Word to hold each other true to it. If we can't be held accountable then we aren't submitting to the Lord, because the state our earthy relationships reflects the condition of our spiritual one with God.
5. **Prayer.** Jesus taught His disciples how to pray (Matt. 6:5-15); therefore, growing in the faith through the process of discipleship requires prayer as well. It is through prayer that we draw closer to God and to others for help and support (cf. Jas. 5:16).
6. **Service.** When God delivered the Hebrews from bondage, He saved them for service (cf. Ex. 3:12). Also, Jesus and Paul engaged their disciples in active service, according to their growth and maturity. To be a disciple is to serve.

## Chapter Five Highlights

### *The Blueprint of Discipleship, Part One*

1. Discipleship is part of the Great Commission.
2. A proper understanding and relationship with authority is essential to discipleship.
3. There are four basic authorities:
  - a. State
  - b. Ecclesiastical
  - c. Administrative
  - d. Domestic
4. Relationship is at the heart of discipleship and is seen in three ways:
  - a. Relationship with God
  - b. Relationship with self
  - c. Relationship with others
5. Obedience and submission are necessary for healthy spiritual growth.

## Definitions and Discussion

1. Evangelism: the spreading of the Christian gospel by public preaching or personal witness. Most of us aren't street corner preachers, but that doesn't mean we aren't evangelists. In the technical sense, we are all called to evangelize the world through our lives because we are ambassadors for Christ (cf. 2 Cor. 5:20). How is our personal witness used as an evangelistic tool?

---

---

---

---

2. When Jesus issued the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20), He stated He had all authority in heaven and on earth and then delegated that authority to the Church in connection to discipleship. Reflect on this. Jot down some thoughts and begin a discussion regarding how spiritual authority is connected to discipleship. What's the need for it? What are the roles we play in that dynamic?

---

---

---

---

---

## Digging for Discovery

The following questions are designed to help you better understand the material covered in the lesson. You can use them for group discussion or for personal study.



1. What are some of the effects of being disconnected from God?

---

---

2. Of the four authorities we learned in this chapter, which one interests you the most and why?

---

---

---

3. Which one do you have the most problem with and why?

---

---

---

4. What is the importance of reconnecting with God? List three things.

---

---

---

---

5. Why do you think submission is frowned upon so much and what does the Bible say about that?

---

---

---

---

---







# **Chapter Six**

## **The Blueprint of Discipleship, Part Two**

---

*“I do not write these things to shame you, but as my beloved children I warn you. For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. Therefore, I urge you, imitate me.”*

(1 Corinthians 4:14,15)

---

### **INTRODUCTION**

Fatherlessness is a problem. Nothing is perhaps worse than for a child to not his or her father. Mothers are generally the more present guardian, and naturally so, for they are the nurturers and sustainers of life. But when a father is absent, all manner of misfortune occurs. Consider the following:

- Children are four times at a greater risk of poverty.
- Children are more likely to have behavioral problems.
- Children are more likely to go to prison.
- Children are more likely to abuse drugs and alcohol.
- Children are two times more likely to drop out of high school.<sup>9</sup>

Fatherlessness could easily be considered a national emergency. There could be listed many more effects, but the space here would fail us. Aside from those tragic effects, fatherlessness also produces another problem that isn't talked about as much anymore. And that problem is the latchkey child.

A latchkey child is one who is between the ages of 5 and 13; they're children who take care of themselves because parents aren't home. These children learn to grow up by themselves in many ways, which isn't a good thing. A reputable website says this:

*“Latchkey child* was a term coined to describe children who wore or carried house keys to school so that they could let themselves into their home when they returned from school. Those children were at home

---

<sup>9</sup> <https://fellowshipoftheminds.com/fathers-day-2019-1-in-4-u-s-children-live-in-fatherless-homes>

without adult supervision until their parents returned from work, school, or other occupations away from home.”<sup>10</sup>

In this second part of the discipleship blueprint, we will continue (and conclude) our lesson on the need for Christians to remain in a vibrant and active discipleship relationship. In chapter four, we learned about Jesus’ command to for us to submit to discipleship, and here we will see how apostle Paul in action.

## **I. Paul Exemplifies Discipleship**

Paul is arguably the greatest apostle who ever lived. He can easily be considered the Moses of the New Testament. As such, most of our New Testament doctrine comes from his writings. Also, he displays discipleship more clearly than anyone else in Scripture. Therefore, we will turn our attention to the blueprint he laid out for us to follow (cf. 1 Cor. 11:1). He does this by showing seven features of a successful discipleship relationship, revealed in the father-son dynamic.

### **Seven Features of a Successful Discipleship Relationship**

The Great Commission will succeed when Christians stop abandoning, neglecting, and abusing their responsibility as spiritual parents. Below are seven features of a healthy discipleship relationship. The father-son dynamic is used here because Paul is the example, but these features are applicable to the mother-daughter model.

*1. There must exist between the father and son a genuine and intimate connection (1 Tim. 1:2; 2 Tim. 1:2).*

Not just anyone can pair up with any stranger in a local church. Like any other earthly relationship, discipleship begins when there is voluntary giving of one’s self. Paul used terms of endearment when addressing Timothy and when mentoring others, showing us that he forged a close connection with those under his spiritual care.

*2. The father takes the son along with him on his journey (Acts 16:2).*

Discipleship is life in action! A spiritual father doesn’t just instruct his son. He takes him on a literal journey. This is how the son learns what living for the Lord is all about. Timothy certainly received plenty of instruction from Paul, but more than that he witnessed how a father submits to the plan of God. Spiritual fathers must do the same.

*3. The father teaches the son by example (Acts 14:21-23).*

Paul was the greatest evangelist of all. He had taken Timothy with him on several of his travels. This allowed Timothy to see Paul in action. He was able to see Paul evangelize in Berea (Acts 17:11), Athens (Acts 17:15), and Corinth (Acts 18:5). In fact, Paul’s 18-month stay at Corinth provided Timothy with enough time to see what a godly man looks like.

*4. The father and son share a kindred spirit (Phil. 2:20).*

Not all personalities get along. Some are extroverted and others are introverted. Therefore, choosing a compatible partner in discipleship is important. This doesn’t mean

---

<sup>10</sup> <https://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/2158/Latchkey-Children.html>

they are emotional twins. It simply means they have similar temperaments and can get along well. Contrary to misguided belief, not all Christians get along well. So, in choosing a discipleship partner, they both must have a kindred spirit.

*5. The son labors alongside his father (Phil. 2:22).*

Hands-on training is a must for any endeavor to become fruitful. Timothy was able to get on-the-job training with Paul on several occasions, so we, too, must get the mentee involved. This highlights the need to pay careful attention to what gifts and talents those being mentored possess, so that they can be put to work in the right places.

*6. The son reflects the father's example in faith and doctrine (1 Cor. 4:17; 2 Tim. 3:10, 11).*

Children naturally emulate their parents (cf. Jn. 5:19). This should be true in the spiritual life as well. In fact, when leaders appoint their replacements, we learn a lot about them by looking at who've they've selected to replace them! Paul was confident in Timothy's example of faith and practice, because he invested years of intimate time in the young man's life. That kind of involvement fosters true spiritual growth and will always reveal itself in a son's life.

*7. The son ultimately becomes a father (1 Tim. 1:13; 18; 3:14, 15; 2 Tim. 1:13; 2:2).*

This is the goal of discipleship: to raise up men and women in the Lord. Discipleship is multiplication, not division; therefore, when exercised correctly, it will increase a person's usefulness, not diminish it. And when a mentee is ready to navigate the waters of real life and ministry, the mentor becomes a trusted advisor.

In the end, biblical discipleship facilitates a discovery of God's blueprint for living and prepare men and women to continue the process of discipleship themselves. As such, the church of Jesus Christ will stand, and the gates of hell will not prevail against her.

May you now be encouraged to enter a discipleship relationship of your own. Seek one out. Ask about it. Whatever you do, don't neglect it. You are much more useful to the Lord when you abide in His blueprints for living.

Be a walking blueprint for Lord!

**“Being a Christian  
is less about  
cautiously  
avoiding sin than  
about  
courageously and  
actively doing  
God's will.”**

**—Ravi Zacharias**

## Chapter Six Highlights

### *The Blueprint of Discipleship, Part Two*

1. Fatherlessness is both a national and spiritual problem.
2. Discipleship emulates the father/son model, which is not restricted to males only. Women are called to follow Paul's example as well.
3. Successful discipleship includes seven features that Paul demonstrated with Timothy:
  - a. There must exist between the father and son a genuine and intimate connection.
  - b. The father takes the son along with him on his journey.
  - c. The father teaches the son by example.
  - d. The father and son share a kindred spirit.
  - e. The son labors alongside his father.
  - f. The son reflects the father's example in faith and doctrine.
  - g. The son ultimately becomes a father.

## Definitions and Discussion

1. Parenting can be defined as ensuring a child's safety, preparing children for life as productive adults, and transmitting cultural values.<sup>11</sup> Proper parenting is critical to a child's growth and development. The same is true for spiritual parenting. List at least two examples below that could qualify as spiritual parenting and begin a group discussion.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

2. What are some of the most tragic consequences of not being engaged the process of discipleship?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.apa.org/topics/parenting/>

## Digging for Discovery

The following questions are designed to help you better understand the material covered in the lesson. You can use them for group discussion or for personal study.



1. Have you ever experienced fatherlessness, personally or in someone else's life? If so, write down how it affected you or the person you know.

---

---

2. If you were a latchkey child, what negative experiences did you have?

---

---

3. Jesus commands us to enter real discipleship relationships with other believers. However, this doesn't happen very often. Can you list a few reasons why?

---

---

4. Write down what you thought discipleship was prior to reading this book. Then, write down what you know it is now.

---

---

5. Of the seven features you just read, which one stands out to you the most and why?

---

---

6. We've been using the phrase "walking blueprint" frequently. What does it mean to you to be a walking blueprint?

---

---

7. If you are not a walking blueprint, how has this affected your life and the life of those you love?

---

---

## Conclusion

---

*“But we were gentle among you, just as a nursing mother cherishes her own children. So, affectionately longing for you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives. . . You are witnesses, and God also, how devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved among you who believe; as you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father does his own children, that you may walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.”*

(1 Thess. 2:7-11)

When looked at from a full counsel perspective, discipleship is about being a parent.

Whether you are a man or a woman, when you enter a discipleship relationship, you begin a relationship that is modeled after the parent-child dynamic. This is important to remember, because even Paul himself made note of this to the Thessalonian church.

Therefore, keep in mind that whether you are a biological parent or not, we are all called to practice spiritual parenthood. We are all adopted sons and daughters of the living God, and we all need parenting. We need the nursing affection of a mother and the charging instruction of a father.

When a child is properly raised in a home, he or she will avoid a lot of pitfalls fatherless children experience. While this book is not a detailed treatment on stats and trends, it does invite us to rethink how our spiritual neglect is affecting the Church. In, fact, part of the reason for a lack of discipleship in the Church is due to unhealthy lifestyles in the home. Consider the following commentary:

The biggest concern for the children that are growing up fatherless is that they are much more likely to have depression and twice as likely to commit suicide. At the root of the problem is mental health. Children with mental health issues tend to drop out of high school and are becoming substance abusers. These children are looking for a sense of protection in a father figure and that is causing them to turn towards gangs, which is getting them caught in a world of crime.<sup>12</sup>

These patterns are present in most of our homes, and, because they become entrenched in our lives, we inadvertently introduce them into our spiritual family. Sadly, once habits are formed in our lives and attitudes are established in the heart, they are hard to break. This reiterates the importance of discipleship. It offers what many of us hardly received in the home.

If you want to learn God’s blueprints for living and discover what you were created for, then you must become engaged in authentic discipleship. Don’t fall for those “know thyself” slogans that appear wise and enlightened. Those self-help models of change are

---

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.theadoptionfirm.com/2019/06/07/fatherlessness-in-america-by-pierce-erhardt/>

rooted in a delusion. They are satanic in nature, because they appoint self-knowledge as the measure of all things. But we already learned in chapter four that without God, we cannot know ourselves. You and I don't need self-knowledge.

We need the Architect of life to reveal His blueprint.



## Bibliography

Mounce, William, D. *The Analytical Lexicon to the Greek New Testament*, Michigan: Zondervan, 1993.

Pfeiffer, Charles, F., Vos, Howard F., and Rea, John. *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary*, Massachusetts: Henrickson Publishing, 2000.

Strong, James. Edited by John Kohlenberger III and James Swanson. *The Strongest Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, Michigan: Zondervan, 2001.

Vine, W.E. *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old & New Testament Words*, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, 1997.

Zodhiates, Spiros. *Hebrew-Greek Key Word Study Bible*, Tennessee: AMG Publishers, 2008.



## About the Author

---

In 1999, after a life-changing visit with his son in the Bexar County Jail's P.A.T.C.H. Program, Ruben surrendered his life to God. Two years later, he led the Bible study group in a Discipleship II class at the Dominguez State Jail. In 2005, he earned an associate degree and began teaching cognitive intervention classes at the Torres unit. In 2007, he co-founded the T.E.A.M. Program, a faith-based dorm initiative at that same unit, by writing the revised proposal which was approved by the Senior Warden, and Ruben was entrusted with teaching, mentoring, discipling, and training men to lead lives of biblical integrity.

In 2011, he led a revival in that prison, helping men discover God's design for their lives. Thus, was birthed *Blueprints for Living Ministries, Inc.* a Christ-centered platform which shares God's design for life. In 2016, he was released from prison, fueled with a desire to give back what was given to him: hope.

As an ex-felon, writer, Bible teacher, and public educator, he has experienced the transforming power of the Gospel and seeks to share God's design with others. Ruben's favorite topics of teaching interest are culture, communication, and anger management, and he enjoys writing about responsible stewardship and personal development. He also holds a consistent correspondence with men behind the razor wire whom he's trained and mentored, and he serves the incarcerated population as a volunteer chaplain. *Losing Control* is his first book to those in prison.

A husband, father, and a tireless believer in God's power to change the human heart, Ruben continues to post articles on his Facebook ministry page, *Blueprints for Living Ministries, Inc.*, about responsible stewardship and personal development. He also blogs about his daily experiences and creates personal videos regarding his firm conviction about the power of hope, encouraging the world to believe that it's never too late to see themselves as God does.

Ruben is happily married and living a blueprint life.

